

# **WASTEBASKET SYSTEM AND APPARATUS FOR RETAINING AND CONCEALING A LINER OF A WASTEBASKET**

## Cross-Reference to Related Application

This application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 to U.S. Provisional  
5 Patent Application Serial No. 60/404,643 of Michael Gardner, entitled  
“WASTEBASKET SYSTEM AND APPARATUS FOR RETAINING AND  
CONCEALING A LINER OF A WASTEBASKET,” which was filed on August 19,  
2002, the entire disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference for all purposes.

## Technical Field

10 The present invention relates generally to wastebaskets, and more  
particularly to a wastebasket system and an apparatus for retaining and concealing the  
liner of a wastebasket.

## Background

15 Wastebasket liners are popular items with consumers, because they are easy  
to carry and facilitate disposal of trash. Further, liners inhibit direct contact between  
trash and the wastebasket itself, preventing unhygienic trash residue from building up  
within the wastebasket, and enhancing the useful life of the wastebasket. However,  
wastebasket liners are often unsightly, because they typically extend over the upper lip of  
20 the wastebasket into plain view. In addition, under certain loading conditions, the upper  
end of a wastebasket liner may slip down into the wastebasket, potentially allowing trash  
to spill from the liner into the wastebasket, causing contamination.

### Summary of the Invention

A wastebasket system and wastebasket liner retaining and concealing apparatus are provided. The wastebasket liner retaining and concealing apparatus is typically for use with a wastebasket liner installed in a wastebasket, wherein the  
5 wastebasket has a base, and a wall extending upward from the base to at least partially enclose a trash-receiving void, the wall terminating in a lip at an upper end. The wastebasket liner retaining and concealing apparatus typically includes an inner wall adapted to conform to an inside of an upper portion of the wall of the wastebasket. The apparatus typically further includes an outer wall adapted to extend downward, outside of  
10 the wastebasket, to cover between about  $1/8$  and  $1/2$  of an upper portion of the outside of the wall of the wastebasket. The apparatus also typically includes a bridging portion connecting an upper end of the inner wall and an upper end of the outer wall, the bridging portion serving to pinch the wastebasket liner against the lip of the wastebasket.

### Brief Description of the Drawings

15 Fig. 1 is an isometric view of a wastebasket system according to one embodiment of the present invention, including a wastebasket and a liner retaining and concealing apparatus.

Fig. 2 is an exploded isometric view of the wastebasket system of Fig. 1.

Fig. 3 is cross-sectional view the wastebasket system of Fig. 1, taken along  
20 line A-A of Fig. 4.

Fig. 4 is a side view of the wastebasket system of Fig. 1.

Fig. 5 is a top view of the wastebasket system of Fig. 1.

Fig. 6 is a detail cross-sectional view the wastebasket system of Fig. 1, taken along line A-A of Fig. 4, shown with a wastebasket liner installed.

Fig. 7 is an isometric view of the liner retaining and concealing apparatus of the wastebasket system of Fig. 1.

5 Fig. 8 is a top view of the liner retaining and concealing apparatus of Fig. 7.

Fig. 9 is a side view of the liner retaining and concealing apparatus of Fig. 7.

Fig. 10 is a cross-sectional view of the liner retaining and concealing apparatus of Fig. 7, taken along line A-A of Fig. 9.

10 Fig. 11 is a detail view of a lip of the liner retaining and concealing apparatus indicated in Fig. 10.

#### Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

Referring to Figs. 1-11, a wastebasket system is shown generally at 10. Wastebasket system 10 typically includes a wastebasket 12 and a liner retaining and  
15 concealing apparatus 14 configured to retain and conceal a wastebasket liner 16.

As shown in Fig. 6, wastebasket 12 typically includes a wall 18 extending upward from a base 20. Wall 18 typically encircles and partially encloses a trash-receiving void 22. A lip 24 is formed at the upper end of wall 18. Typically, wall 18 extends downward from the lip to the base at a slight angle toward a central longitudinal  
20 axis 32 of the wastebasket. This angle is typically about 4 degrees, although a wide variety of other angles may be used.

Liner retaining and concealing apparatus 14 typically includes an outer wall 26 and an inner wall 28, connected at respective upper ends by bridging portion 30. As the inner wall extends downward from the bridging portion, it angles inward toward central axis 32, while as the outer wall extends downward from the bridging portion, it angles outward, away from central axis 32. Inner wall 28 typically angles inward at approximately 4 degrees, while outer wall 26 typically angles outward at approximately 1 degree, although a wide variety of other angles may be used. It will be appreciated that inner wall 28 and outer wall 26 extend in loop-like fashion around inner and outer perimeters of the apparatus, respectively, to thereby form a ring.

Outer wall 26 functions to cover an overhanging portion 34 of wastebasket liner 16. The length of overhanging portion 34 may vary, and thus the length of outer wall 26 may also vary. Typically, outer wall 26 covers between about  $1/8$  and  $1/2$  of the upper portion of wastebasket 12. In one preferred embodiment of the invention, outer wall 26 covers between about  $1/4$  and  $1/2$  of the wastebasket, and in a particularly preferred embodiment between about  $1/3$  and  $3/8$  of the wastebasket. On most wastebaskets, these dimensions enable the liner to be completely covered when properly installed.

Inner wall 28 also functions to conceal an upper portion of the wastebasket liner 16 from view when viewed from the side, for example by persons seated or standing a distance from the wastebasket. For this reason, and also to aid in retaining the wastebasket liner, inner wall 28 extends downward from the bridge portion 30 to conceal between about  $1/16$  and  $1/2$  of the inside, upper portion of the wastebasket 12.

According to another embodiment of the invention, inner wall 28 extends to conceal between about 1/8 and 1/4 of the inside, upper portion of wastebasket 12. And, according to one particularly preferred embodiment of the invention, inner wall 28 extends to cover about 1/7 of the inside upper, portion of the wastebasket. These ranges provide a combination of retaining and concealing effects that have been found to be preferred, although it will be appreciated that a wide variety of other dimensions may be used.

When installed, the liner retaining and concealing apparatus pinches the wastebasket liner 16 in pinching regions 36 adjacent the bridging portion 30 and lip 24. In addition or alternatively, pinching regions 36 may be formed between inner wall 28 and wall 18, and/or between outer wall 26 and lip 24/wall 18. By pinching liner 16, apparatus 14 inhibits overhanging portions 34 of the liner from creeping back into the interior void 22 of the wastebasket under loading, thereby avoiding unintended spilling and contamination.

It will be appreciated that liner 16 and wastebasket 12 may be manufactured in similar colors to appear as a set, or may be manufactured in contrasting colors according to users' preferences. Typically, both are made of a plastic such as urethane, however, a wide variety of materials may be used.

The present system and apparatus may be used both to conceal a wastebasket liner in an aesthetically pleasing manner, and also to retain and secure the liner to prevent unwanted spills, thereby overcoming problems associated prior art wastebaskets.

Although the invention has been disclosed in its preferred forms, the specific embodiments thereof as disclosed and illustrated herein are not to be considered in a limiting sense, because numerous variations are possible. The subject matter of the invention includes all novel and non-obvious combinations and subcombinations of the  
5 various elements, features, functions, and/or properties disclosed herein.